

This record is a partial extract of the original cable. The full text of the original cable is not available.

UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 03 TEL AVIV 002145

SIPDIS

STATE FOR NEA, NEA/IPA, NEA/PPD

WHITE HOUSE FOR PRESS OFFICE, SIT ROOM  
NSC FOR NEA STAFF

JERUSALEM ALSO FOR ICD  
LONDON ALSO FOR HKANONA AND POL  
PARIS ALSO FOR POL  
ROME FOR MFO  
E.O. 12958: N/A  
TAGS: [IS KMDR MEDIA REACTION REPORT](#)  
SUBJECT: ISRAEL MEDIA REACTION

-----  
SUBJECTS COVERED IN THIS REPORT:  
-----

Mideast

-----  
Key stories in the media:  
-----

Maariv and Ha'aretz cited Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice in an interview with AP as saying that Israel should not raze the houses in the settlements that it evacuates unless the PA asks for it. Maariv noted that the interview was mostly critical towards Israel and that Rice promised that the U.S. would assist the PA in rehabilitating Gaza. Ha'aretz added that since President George Bush wishes to hold a festive meeting, he will not raise controversial issues with Prime Minister Ariel Sharon.

Yediot Aharonot leads with a report from a meeting Prime Minister Sharon chaired in his office that was attended by Defense Minister Mofaz and other officials involved in planning the practicalities of disengagement. Mofaz presented some of the specifics of the Defense Ministry's work plan for disengagement, whereby the evacuation of settlements in the Gaza Strip would last three weeks only, and not four as previously planned. Maariv reports about a separate meeting that was held yesterday by the directors-general of the various government ministries, also to discuss practical aspects of disengagement. Sharon instructed the security establishment to allow the public to visit Gush Katif during Passover in order "to say goodbye to the settlements." This is contrary to recommendations by security officials to close Gush Katif to visitors before the holiday, out of concern that thousands would try to remain in the settlements with the purpose of preventing the evacuation.

Maariv added that the settlements Nissanit and Elei Sinai have decided to "disengage" from Gaza, as residents there claim that the land of the two communities was never under Egyptian control but rather was a demilitarized zone under UN control.

Yediot Aharonot reported that, prior to the prime minister's visit to Washington, Agriculture Minister Yisrael Katz yesterday spoke out openly against the American position which rules out construction in the settlements: "The government of Israel and the Likud will continue to build and develop Jewish settlement in greater Jerusalem, Judea and Samaria, the Jordan Valley and all the security areas, even if this results in disagreements with the US."

Ha'aretz related that senior officials in the Palestinian Authority have presented a plan to American and Israeli officials for coordinating the disengagement from Gaza and the northern West Bank. A source involved in the contacts told Ha'aretz yesterday that the plan includes coordinating the handover of overall security responsibility in the areas the Israel Defense Forces leaves, to the PA's National Security force; a complete cease-fire during the evacuation process; and a Palestinian commitment to take all necessary steps to prevent shooting at Israeli targets outside the Strip. However, the Palestinians condition the plan on Israeli agreement to it and on Israeli help in equipping the Gaza security forces with weapons and other equipment necessary for imposing law and order in Gaza.

Maariv reported that yesterday, Foreign Minister Shalom held his first working session with Jordanian Ambassador Ma'aruf al-Behayt who asked that Israel

release Jordanian prisoners held in Israel. Shalom said he believes this would happen after the PM's U.S. visit.

Ha'aretz reported that the police yesterday announced plans to close the Temple Mount compound to Jews on 10 April, when a right-wing extremist group called Revava was planning to hold a mass rally there. Police fear the activists might clash with Muslim worshippers.

-----  
Mideast:  
-----

Summary:  
-----

Nationalist writer Uri Dan commented both in popular, pluralist Maariv and conservative, independent Jerusalem Post: "Those who thought that Bush's letter would be enough were mistaken from the very beginning. What is really needed is an unceasing, tenacious and bitter struggle for the borders of the Jewish State -- borders that will give us maximum security as we struggle under difficult domestic and international conditions. Only Sharon, there in Texas, and afterwards, can carry out this impossible mission."

Block Quotes:  
-----

"Arik's Mission Impossible"

Nationalist writer Uri Dan commented both in popular, pluralist Maariv and conservative, independent Jerusalem Post (April 7): "The time has come to realize the understanding between Bush and Sharon. It is clear that both leaders will have to turn words into deeds. Sharon will once again have to convince Bush why he regards the plan to establish continuity of settlement between Jerusalem and Ma'aleh Adumim on the way to the Dead Sea as vital for Israel's defense, and how he regards the other Jewish blocs of settlement, without harming the course of the road map. In other words, there is a chance that after the summit in Texas Israelis will better understand that the Jewish State will receive a tangible, long-term return for the earthquake in the Gaza Strip planned for the summer. This will be while the Palestinian enemy is re-stocking its arsenal for continuing the war, as reported by the U.S. intelligence services. Those who thought that Bush's letter would be enough were mistaken from the very beginning. What is really needed is an unceasing, tenacious and bitter struggle for the borders of the Jewish State -- borders that will give us maximum security as we struggle under difficult domestic and international conditions. Only Sharon, there in Texas, and afterwards, can carry out this impossible mission."  
KURTZER